



THERESE MURRAY  
PRESIDENT

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**MASSACHUSETTS SENATE**  
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July 17, 2008

Alan Risenhoover, Director  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East-West Highway, SSMC3  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Director Risenhoover:

I write to you today in regards to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) updated environmental review procedures.

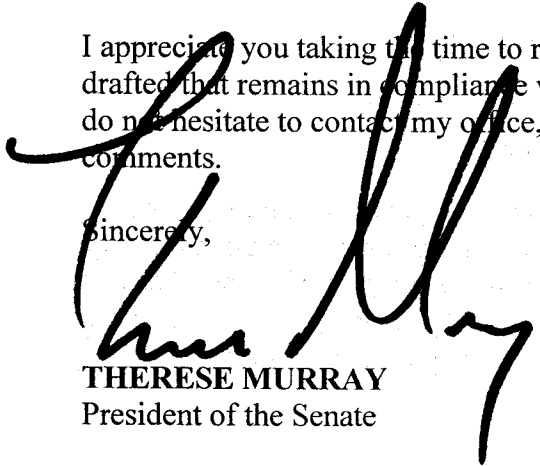
I represent coastal communities whose livelihoods rely heavily on the fishing industry and our ocean. I understand the importance of protecting our natural resources and ensuring their livelihood, and co-sponsored legislation that created an ocean management plan to ensure our ocean waters, and the interests of the fishing community, are protected. This legislation was signed into law in May of this year.

Concerns about the updated NMFS environmental review procedures have recently been brought to my attention due to a purported non-compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As you know, compliance with NEPA is essential to ensuring that environmental impacts to proposed projects are thoroughly reviewed.

NEPA fears that these new environmental review procedures will be detrimental to both fishery management and ocean ecosystems. Among their main concerns, NEPA would like environmental review to remain the responsibility of NMFS, as well as maintain the current 45 day public comment period.

I appreciate you taking the time to review this request. It is my hope that a proposal be drafted that remains in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. Please do not hesitate to contact my office, at 617-722-1500, should you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,



THERESE MURRAY  
President of the Senate

TM/jh